

CHAPTER 7

Women-Owned Small Business Program

The number of women-owned businesses continues to grow at twice the rate of all U.S. firms, and these firms are increasing in economic clout. One in eighteen women in the U.S. is a business owner.¹ Notwithstanding this growth in economic power, women continue to face challenges to growth. These challenges include but are not limited to access to capital, access to markets, access to training and technical assistance, access to networks, and the need for legitimacy.²

The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, is working to increase business opportunities for women businesses. We have a designated women-Owned Business Advocate and committee which focus specifically on helping women business owners obtain access and information on how to do business with the Department.

A. INTRODUCTION

A women-owned business is defined as a small business concern – (a) which is at least 51 percent owned by one or more women; or, in the case of any publicly owned business, at least 51 percent of the stock of which is owned by one or more women; and (b) whose management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more women. (FAR 19.001).

The Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-355) (FASA) established the government wide goal for participation by small business concerns owned and controlled by women at not less than 5% of the total value of all prime contract and subcontract awards for each fiscal year. Notwithstanding this goal, there are currently no set-aside procurement programs or incentives for awarding a contract to a women-owned small business.

The federal government does not require any formal certification for women-owned small businesses that are proposing as prime contractors on federal procurements. Women-owned businesses must self-certify that they meet the definition in FAR 19.001 as a women-owned business.

¹ Center for Women's Business Research, "One in 18 U.S. Women is a Business Owner," 2002.
<http://www.womensbusinessresearch.org/Resrarch/7-16-2002/7-16-2002.htm>

² Fact Sheet, National Women's Business Council, Key Facts About Women Business Owners and Their Enterprises, August 2004

B. SMALL BUSINESS PREFERENCE PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS

While there is no specific set-aside provision for women-owned businesses, businesses owned and controlled by women may qualify for other small business preference programs that do have set-aside provisions. The Historically Underutilized Business Program, Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Business Program, and the Section 8(a) Business Development Program all are open to women business owners and have set-aside or other preference provisions which provide incentives for women business owners to obtain a competitive edge in Federal Procurement opportunities.

If a woman owned business is eligible for the preference programs listed above and obtains an award from a Federal Agency, that agency will receive credit not only for the preference program but also will obtain credit towards their women-owned business goals. Women business owners are encouraged to obtain certifications and participate in as many preference programs as possible.

C. HHS WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS PROGRAM INITIATIVES

The Department of Health and Human Services has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Small Business Administration, which clarifies and identifies HHS' commitment to fostering women-owned small business participation in the agency's acquisition process. The WOB Advocate has established the following initiatives for each fiscal year:

- Implement initiatives outlined in the MOU
- Host women-owned small business forums
- Conduct Training Workshops
- Develop an HHS Women's Mentoring Program
- Conduct site visits to women-owned small businesses
- Join other women-owned business organizations
- Establish a "Secretary of Health and Human Services Women-Owned Small Business Award"
- Sponsor a women-owned small business retreat featuring guest speakers and networking opportunities
- Conduct Outreach activities

D. FEDERAL POINTS OF CONTACT FOR WOMEN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES

- National Women's Business Council – www.nwbc.gov
- General Services Administration – www.gsa.gov
- U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business – www.senate.gov/sbc/
- U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Small Business – www.hosue.gov/smbiz
- SBA's Women Business Office – www.sba.gov/womeninbusiness

- SBA's Office of Women's Business Ownership – www.sbaonline.sba.gov/womeninbusiness/
- White House Office of Women's Initiatives and Outreach – www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/Women/OWIO/index.html
- Biz Women – www.bizwomen.com
- The National Foundation for Women Business Owners – www.nfwbo.org/nfwbo/